



Navigating turbulent skies

Global Business Climate Survey 2025

Inside perspectives from Swedish companies
on doing business abroad

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Preamble

In a world characterised by shifting tectonic blocks of geopolitics, increased levels of conflict as well as significant effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, we must not lose sight of the potential of trade and investment as drivers for positive impact. It is encouraging to note that Swedish companies maintain a cautiously positive outlook on prospects for investing and doing business internationally, in spite of current challenges.

In light of the new geopolitical era, the fundamentals in the global economy are still valid. World trade has been remarkably resilient despite several major economic shocks. We must bear in mind the many benefits and increased trade flows that our free trade agreements have already brought us. Free trade is more important than ever and the World Trade Organisation is a pillar in a rules-based world order. Sweden is at the forefront in pushing for free trade and a finalisation of additional free trade agreements, with Latin America, India, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and others. As well as pushing for a revitalisation of the Single Market – Sweden's home market and largest export market.

Since I became Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, I have had the pleasure of experiencing the strength of Swedish presence around the world. Swedish companies, by exporting and investing, contribute to green and digital transition as well as a climate smart, innovative energy mix, but also to sustainable solutions in mining, transport and health care. Innovation and sustainability are in the DNA of Swedish companies, which bring a competitive edge, but also contribute to reaching global development goals. In addition, Swedish companies have an important role in the reconstruction and development of Ukraine.

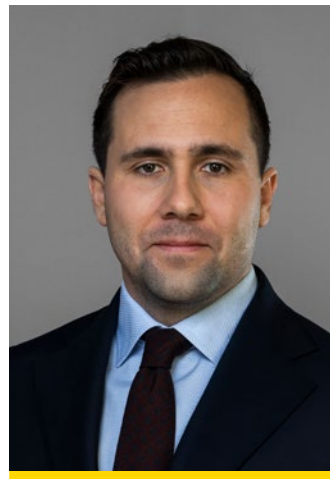
It is encouraging to see how synergies between development cooperation, trade policy and trade promotion can leverage increased levels of resources, while promoting development. There is more potential to tap into this nexus.

I was impressed to learn that 82 per cent of our companies underline that "Brand Sweden" supports their business success abroad. But we should strive for 100 per cent. The recently launched Sweden Brand Strategy for a renewed and further strengthened image of Sweden is aimed at consolidating and further improving the image of Sweden abroad. I trust that this will reinforce competitiveness of Swedish companies.

The Sweden Brand Strategy is part of our efforts to use a more consolidated approach in promoting Swedish exports. Different agencies and organisations should not work in silos, but together – as one team: Team Sweden.

Benjamin Dousa

Minister for International Development
Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Sweden



Benjamin Dousa

Minister for International
Development Cooperation
and Foreign Trade of Sweden

Steering through clouds with tactical resolve

As we write 2025, the geopolitical landscape is characterised by increased uncertainty and complexity. The war in Ukraine continues to affect the European security order and the relationship between the West and Russia. The situation in the Middle East is bringing significant human suffering and widespread damage.

The geopolitical tensions between the United States and China remain, in their competition for economic, technological and military leadership. Tariff policy has taken centre stage in the new US administration's economic strategy. Domestically, the measures are seen as a tool to support jobs, industrial production and national security. Internationally, however, they create challenges for global supply chains and increase pressure on companies to review their market strategies.

The reactions from the outside world have varied. Some countries have responded with their own measures, while others have chosen to open negotiations on trade deals with the US.

Globally, the geopolitical situation is affected by increased protectionism and a decline in multilateral cooperation. Climate change and the green transition have become geopolitical issues in themselves, where control over energy, critical minerals and technologies of the future plays a key role in the balance of power.

Against the backdrop of this worsening geopolitical situation and the concurrent slowdown in the global economy, we are pleased to present the results of this year's edition of the Global Business Climate Survey, which is made in collaboration between Business Sweden, the Swedish Chambers of Commerce (SCI), and Sweden's embassies and consulates. Since its inception six years ago, the survey has developed into a central tool for understanding the global business climate from a Swedish perspective. This year marks another significant step in this development, as the global report now covers a total of 37 markets – an increase of 13 new markets compared to the previous year.

By gathering experiences and prospects from Swedish business leaders in widely different markets – from Asia, the Middle East and Africa to Europe and the Americas – the report provides a comprehensive picture of opportunities, challenges and strategic success factors.

This year's survey provides some positive signals for the year ahead. Despite uncertainties, 70 per cent of Swedish companies state that they are cautiously optimistic about the business climate, where the highest scores are reported for Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and India. Almost half of Swedish companies plan to increase their investments in the coming year. Saudi Arabia, India and the United Kingdom are top investment destinations for Swedish companies.

The report also highlights what it takes to succeed internationally. Cost efficiency, partnerships and sales competence are pointed out as crucial competitive factors, while Brand Sweden continues to be a strategically valuable tool in many markets.

The message from our survey is clear: despite the unstable geopolitical situation, there are business opportunities out there. There is no reason to wait for better days. Swedish companies are good at what they do and can benefit strongly from expanding abroad.

We would like to thank all the Swedish companies that have participated in the survey for their time and commitment. Their insights form the very basis of this report. We look forward to continuing to contribute to their success in the global market, through our local presence, our networks and useful insights into markets and industries.



Jan Larsson
CEO,
Business Sweden



Daniella Waldfogel
President,
Swedish Chambers
International

Jan Larsson
President and CEO
Business Sweden

Daniella Waldfogel
President
Swedish Chambers International (SCI)

Global Business Climate Survey covers:

+2,000 respondents from **37** markets
where Swedish companies are active

Current business climate

Cautious stance on the business climate, though 70 per cent signals a moderately positive outlook

Industry turnover

65%

of Swedish companies expect their industry turnover to increase

Future investments

46%

of Swedish companies plan to increase their investments slightly or significantly in the next 12 months

Top 3 success factors

1. Cost efficiency
2. Partnerships
3. Sales competence



Brand Sweden

82%



of Swedish companies abroad consider **Brand Sweden** to be beneficial for business

Most satisfying local conditions

1. Personal safety
2. Distributors
3. Service providers

Least satisfying local conditions

1. Licenses, permits and approvals
2. Labour market regulation
3. Corporate taxation

Environmental considerations

38%

of respondents believe the environment is a considerable factor in their customers' purchasing decisions

Trade barriers

- Customs procedures
- Regulations
- Customs duties

Executive summary

Last year, the Global Business Climate Survey marked an important milestone: five years of gathering invaluable insights from Swedish companies operating worldwide. But in 2025 there is further cause for celebration as the survey expands its scope by an additional 13 markets. This means that the views of business leaders in no fewer than 37 markets are now reflected in this survey report – packed with all the first-hand information you need when expanding abroad.

By adding this achievement, we can continue our mission to capture perspectives on economic developments, success factors, local business conditions and sustainability initiatives in all corners of the globe. As always, the goal is to provide a comprehensive framework for comparing results across markets and regions. It is important to note that the surveys, conducted between February and March 2025, do not account for the potential impacts of recent policy changes, such as the implementation of new US import tariffs in early 2025.

Drawing on the experiences and insights of senior representatives, the report compiles Swedish companies' collective assessment of the current business climate and their future expectations. Their message comes through with unmistakable clarity, as outlined below.

Cautious outlook

Swedish companies are taking a cautious stance on the 2025 business climate, though 70 per cent report overall scores above three (on a scale from 1 to 5), signalling a moderately positive outlook. The Middle East, Africa and surrounding markets (MEA+) receive the most optimistic outlook, closely followed by the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. MEA+'s outlook is predominantly driven by high scores for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), while India, Singapore and Taiwan stand for the highest scores in APAC. Europe and the Americas receive the lowest and most varied scores.

Profitability across regions

Despite regional variation in business climate perceptions, Swedish companies report a generally profitable 2024. Profitability levels show only minor regional differences, with large companies in the industrial sector consistently demonstrating the highest degrees of profitability.

Growth expectations

65 per cent of the participating companies reported that they expect their industry's turnover to increase in 2025 – a sentiment consistent across the regions. Newly established companies express the highest rates of optimism regarding growth potential globally.

Nearly half of Swedish companies planning to increase investments

46 per cent of Swedish companies operating outside of Sweden reportedly plan to increase their investments over the coming year. While investment plans often mirror positive business climates like in India and Saudi Arabia, notable exceptions include the United Kingdom, Chile, and the United States, which enjoy strong investment intent despite receiving lower business climate scores.

Cost efficiency a leading success factor for international competitiveness

Swedish companies highlight the need for cost efficiency, partnerships, and sales competence as the most critical success factors in maintaining international competitiveness.

Brand Sweden a strategic asset for success

82 per cent of companies report that 'Brand Sweden' supports their business success abroad. This is particularly true in Brazil, Türkiye and South Korea, where over 90 per cent confirm its relevance. MEA+ (notably Türkiye and Saudi Arabia) and APAC (especially Vietnam) also show strong results. In contrast, in culturally or geographically close markets like Norway and Finland, the Swedish brand's added value is perceived as less important.

Operational conditions and sustainability

Swedish companies view personal safety, as well as access to local distributors and service providers, as the most favourable conditions while operating outside of Sweden. Licensing, labour regulation and corporate taxation are viewed as the least favourable. Regulatory hurdles, particularly customs and compliance, are most often encountered in the MEA+ region and the Americas. Europe (especially Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark) leads when it comes to sustainability influencing customer purchasing decisions.

Introduction

The *Global Business Climate Survey 2025* provides a unique overview of how Swedish companies view the current business landscape and future opportunities outside of Sweden. For the first time, the survey covers 37 markets, reflecting the growing international footprint of Swedish businesses and offering a broader and more detailed understanding of global conditions than ever before. Additionally, the survey was conducted in four supplementary markets: Kenya, Morocco, Peru and Slovakia. While these markets are excluded from the global survey results due to insufficient sample sizes, brief summaries of their findings are presented at the end of the report.

Through close collaboration between Business Sweden, Swedish Chambers International (SCI), and Sweden's embassies and consulates around the world, the survey gathers insights from companies with Swedish ownership or strong Swedish ties. It captures key perspectives on local success factors, market conditions, economic developments and sustainability trends. The aim is to support Swedish companies in navigating a rapidly evolving global environment and identifying new avenues for growth.

The 2025 edition builds on harmonised methodology, using a standard set of 18 core questions. No changes were made to the core questions compared to the previous year to ensure continuity and enable long-term trend analysis. More than 2,000 senior representatives of Swedish companies were surveyed, sharing their views on competitiveness, market challenges and business outlooks.

The survey was conducted in February and March 2025, prior to the introduction of new US import tariffs. Consequently, the responses gathered may not capture the potential effects these policy changes could have on Swedish companies or market sentiment. This context should be considered when interpreting the findings of this year's survey.

The participants in the survey encompass organisations of diverse scale, industry focus and developmental stage in the marketplace.

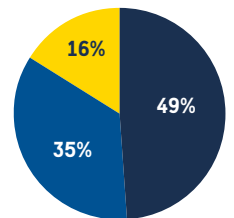
- 49 per cent of the respondents represent large companies, 16 per cent from medium-sized companies and 35 per cent from small-sized companies.
- 41 per cent of the companies operate within the industrial sector, 29 per cent in professional services, 15 per cent in consumer sectors and 15 per cent in other sectors.
- In terms of maturity, 42 per cent of companies are classified as mature, 41 per cent as experienced and 17 per cent as newcomers to their respective markets.

Thanks to consistently strong response rates across the majority of markets, the Global Business Climate Survey offers a reliable basis for global comparisons and market-specific analysis. The 2025 edition covers 37 markets. Fourteen markets are in Europe: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Ukraine and the United Kingdom; six in the Americas: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the United States; 13 in the APAC region: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam; and four markets in the MEA+ region: Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye and the UAE.

More details about factors such as survey coverage, recipients, response rate and regional groupings are presented in a [technical note](#) at the end of this report. It is important to note that response percentages may not add up to 100 per cent as 'undecided' or 'don't know' answers are excluded in the graphs.

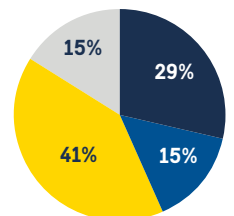
The findings serve as a guide for Swedish companies navigating the complexities of international business – highlighting risks, opportunities and the path to success in a changing global context. Together, the findings aim to serve as a practical guide for Swedish companies navigating the complexities of international business – highlighting risks, opportunities, and the factors that drive success in a changing global context.

Size of firms



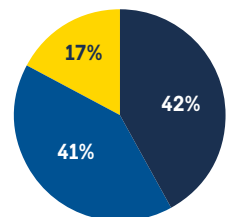
- Large (>1000)
- Medium (250–1000)
- Small (0–249)

Main sectors



- Professional services
- Consumer
- Industrial
- Other

Maturity level



- Mature
- Experienced
- Newcomer

Business performance and outlook

This chapter covers three key areas: business climate, profitability, and investments, providing a comprehensive view of the conditions Swedish companies face abroad.

Swedish companies operating outside of Sweden generally display a cautiously optimistic assessment of the global business climate in 2025, based on the results gathered during the survey period February to March 2025. Although most markets reflect lower levels of optimism than they did last year, 70 per cent of companies report overall scores above three (on a scale from 1 to 5), indicating a moderately positive outlook. The Arab Gulf states of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, together with India, continue to be among the most favourable business environments for Swedish companies, in line with the patterns observed last year.

In terms of profitability, 66 per cent of companies reported positive financial outcomes for 2024, while 14 per cent achieved break-even results and 11 per cent experienced negative financial performance. Looking ahead, 46 per cent reported that they intend to increase their investments in the coming year, suggesting a cautiously optimistic outlook despite prevailing uncertainties in the international business climate.

Business climate perception

Swedish companies' perspective of the business climate abroad is influenced by various factors, such as the day-to-day business environment in each country offering insights into how local conditions in global markets are evolving. The results are valuable for Swedish companies when considering expansion into new markets or further investment in existing ones. It is important to note that the surveys, conducted between February and March 2025, do not account for the potential impacts of recent policy changes, such as the implementation of new US tariffs in early 2025.

Overall, Swedish companies express a more cautious outlook on the international business climate compared to the previous year. The average business climate index for 2025 stands at 3.3 on a scale from one to five, where one signifies 'very poor' and five 'very good'. This suggests a modest decline from the 2024 score of 3.4. It is worth noting that this year's broader market coverage may have contributed to the decrease.

However, even when limiting the comparison to the 24 markets included both years, the average score falls to 3.3. This signals a less positive sentiment in these markets regarding business climate perception independent of the expanded scope of the analysis.

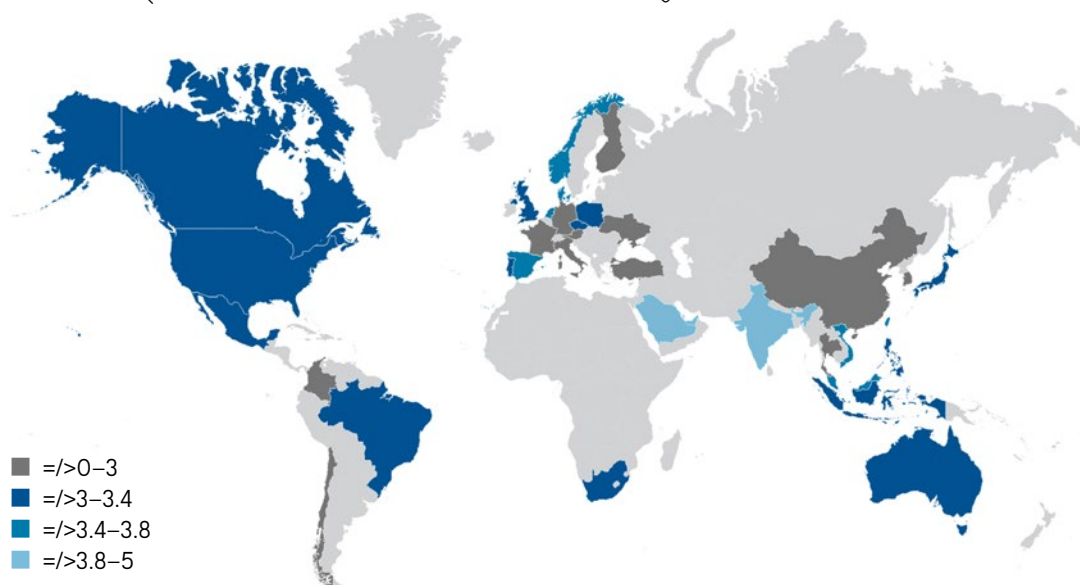
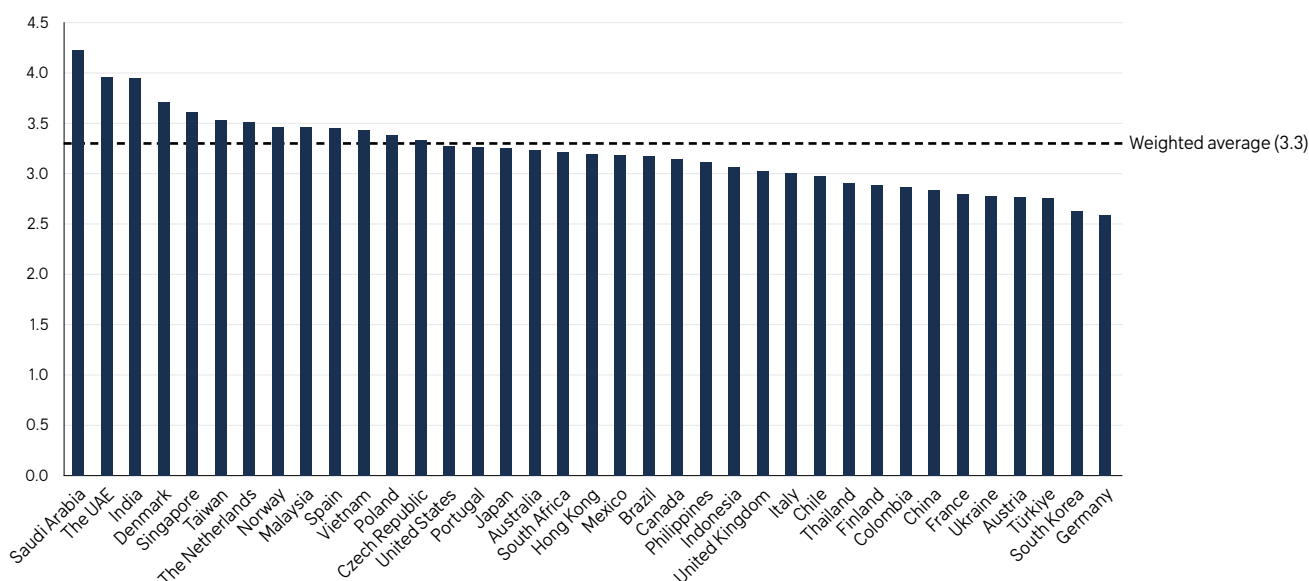
Perceptions of the business climate have either declined or remained stable in the majority of the markets present in last year's analysis. The Arab Gulf states of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, continue to offer the most favourable business climates, followed by Denmark and Singapore. In contrast, markets such as Germany, South Korea and Türkiye receive the least optimism from Swedish companies, with South Korea experiencing a significant decline, likely due to continued political instability. All three markets have an overall score below three, signaling a more pessimistic view of the business climate. In South Africa, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Spain, Hong Kong, India, and Japan, sentiment regarding business climate has shown marginal improvements.

“Trade policy uncertainty is at a record high, with President Trump's trade war straining the global economy. Though companies are adapting well, the rising geopolitical tensions and protectionism is making global business more complex. Team Sweden operates in over 40 markets and is ready to help you navigate this shifting landscape.”

Lena Sellgren, Chief Economist, Business Sweden

Swedish companies are taking a cautiously optimistic stance on the 2025 business climate

Index measuring Swedish companies views of the current business climate, where 1 equals very poor and 5 very good



To gain a deeper understanding of how Swedish companies perceive the current business climate across markets, [the graph on page 11](#) illustrates the distribution of responses across five categories: very good, good, neutral, poor and very poor, shown by market, region and overall.

Globally, 6 per cent of the responding companies rated the business climate as very good,

27 per cent as good, 43 per cent as neutral, 21 per cent as poor and 2 per cent as very poor. Saudi Arabia recorded the highest share of positive responses, with 90 per cent of companies rating the business climate as good or very good, although this is a slight decrease of two percentage points compared to last year.

The business climate outlook varies significantly across regions, with notable contrasts

👉 India's business climate is stable and moderately optimistic, driven by strong domestic demand, macroeconomic stability, and infrastructure investment. Technological progress, supportive reforms, and a robust services sector – especially IT and finance – are boosting investor confidence. It's a promising time for business but preparedness remains key. 👉

Sujata Wuthoo, Managing Director India & Business Unit Manager Clean Technologies
(India, GCC & SEA) at Munters India Humidity Control Private Ltd.

between high-performing and lower-scoring markets. MEA+ and APAC stand out with strong results, while Europe and the Americas lag behind. To better understand regional differences in sentiment, the results have also been broken down by region:

Middle East, Africa and surrounding markets (MEA+)

MEA+ markets showed the most positive business outlook overall. In this region, 54 per cent of companies rated the business climate as good or very good, an increase of eight percentage points from 2024. Saudi Arabia and the UAE led the way with the highest levels of optimism.

Asia-Pacific (APAC)

An average of 47 per cent of companies reported a positive view (good or very good) of the business climate. India, Singapore, and Japan showed the strongest results, while markets such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and China reflected more cautious sentiment.

Europe

In Europe, while an average of 32 per cent of companies reported a positive view (good or very good) of the business climate, certain European markets displayed considerable variation. Companies in Denmark, the Netherlands,

Norway, and Spain were significantly more positive, whereas businesses in Germany, Portugal and Ukraine reported more pessimistic views. Notably, perceptions in France and the United Kingdom have declined markedly compared to 2024.

Americas

Equally to Europe, the Americas had a low score of Swedish companies reflecting a positive view of the business climate, having only 32 per cent answering good or very good. Canada expressed a significantly less optimistic view than in 2024. Brazil, Mexico and the United States also showed a decline in sentiment. Newly added markets Chile and Colombia recorded low scores.

When analysing the responses by market maturity, newcomers appear to be the most optimistic about the business climate, with 45 per cent of these companies globally rating it as good or very good. In contrast, mature companies are more pessimistic, with 23 per cent describing the climate as poor or very poor. Sector-wise, companies in professional services express the most positive outlook, while those in the consumer sector are more negative. Company size does not appear to significantly influence the responses.

“ Political instability is affecting demand heavily. Everyone is in waiting mode and doesn’t invest or consume. ”

Living space manufacturer, Germany



São Paulo, Brazil

MEA+ and APAC show highest optimism in term of business climate 2025

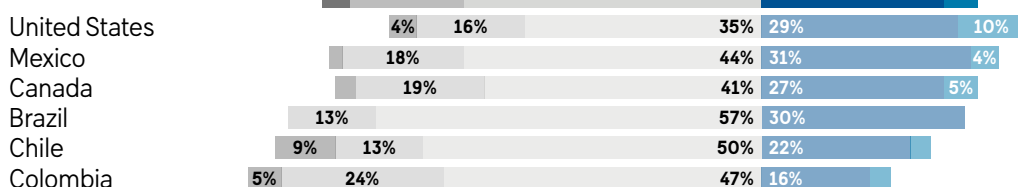
Index measuring Swedish companies views of the current business climate, where 1 equals very poor and 5 very good.
Response percentages may not add up to 100 per cent as 'undecided' answers are excluded in the graph.

■ Very Poor ■ Poor ■ Neutral ■ Good ■ Very Good

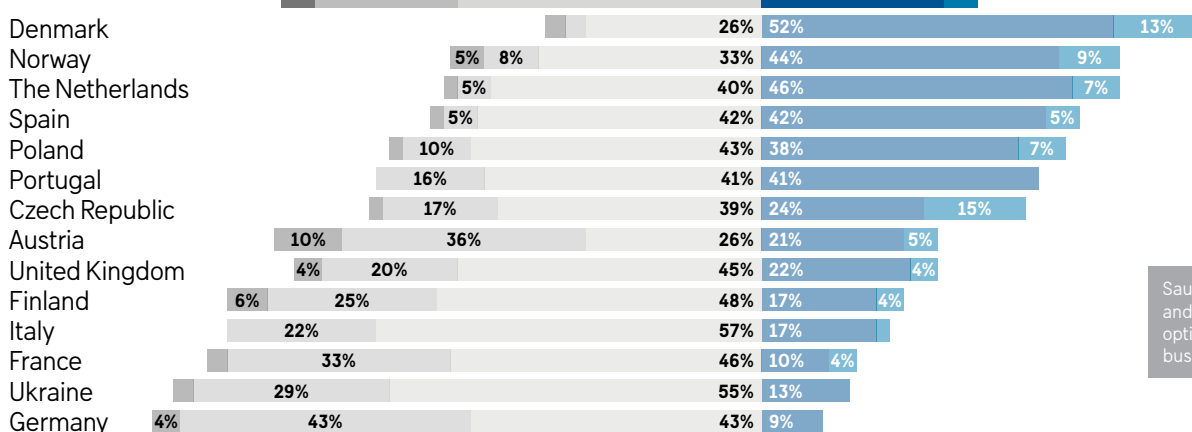
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Americas

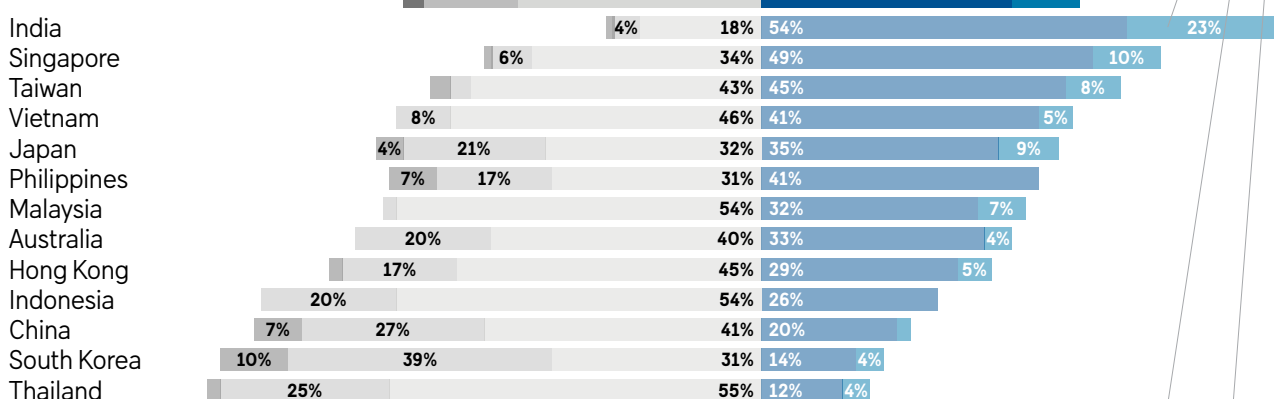


Europe

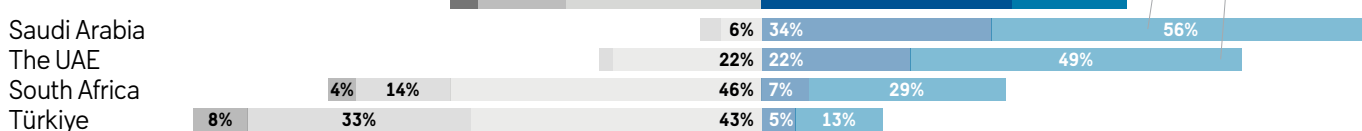


Saudi Arabia, the UAE and India shows highest optimism in term of business climate

APAC



MEA+



Survey question: How do you perceive the current business climate?

Profitability

Majority of Swedish companies profitable abroad, despite being cautiously optimistic on business climate

In this year's survey, 66 per cent of the responding companies reported profitability for the financial year 2024, while 14 per cent reached break-even and 11 per cent recorded a loss. The profitability of Swedish companies in 2024 showed less regional divergence compared to perceptions of the business climate.

Globally, most businesses achieved profitability in 2024, with the percentage of profitable companies in most countries ranging between 60 and 80 per cent.

The MEA+ region led with the highest share of profitable companies, driven by strong results in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, followed by Europe and the Americas and then APAC. However, regional differences were relatively small.

At a market level, aside from Saudi Arabia, Chile, Spain and Norway recorded the highest shares of profitable Swedish companies with more than 80 per cent of the companies indicating profitability in 2024. In contrast, the Philippines, South Korea and the United States

reported the lowest shares. Denmark and South Korea stood out with the highest shares of companies reporting a loss.

Profitability levels varied by company size. Among large companies, 80 per cent reported a profitable year, compared to 61 per cent of medium-sized companies and 53 per cent of small companies. Medium-sized companies in particular saw a notable decline with profitability falling by 10 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Small companies reported the highest share of losses globally with 17 per cent indicating a negative result for 2024. In most markets, smaller companies were more vulnerable to losses. However, there were exceptions. In Ukraine, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa and Vietnam, large companies accounted for the highest share of losses. Meanwhile, in Denmark, South Africa and Türkiye, small companies were the most likely to be profitable.

Some sector differences were also observed. Industrial companies reported the highest share of profitability at 72 per cent, followed by companies in the consumer sector (67 per cent) and professional services (65 per cent). The consumer sector reported the largest share of negative results.

“ The Spanish market is performing well. Our clients are doing well across many sectors, showing a good project pipeline. ”

Fernando Sánchez García, Managing Director, Roxtec Iberia

“ We still believe in the US – it represents 60 per cent of our business. We have struggled quite a lot given the uncertainty in the past year, but we see a good future in the US which remains a big, important market for us. ”

Roger Johansson, CEO, Aliaro



Madrid, Spain

Most Swedish companies remain profitable abroad with minor differences between regions

Share of respondents' reporting on financial results in 2024 per cent.

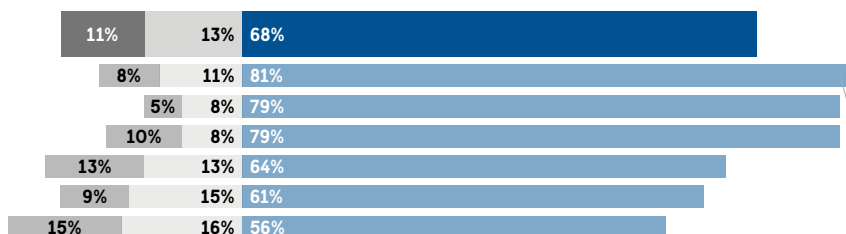
Response percentages may not add up to 100 as 'undecided' answers are excluded from the graph.

■ Loss ■ Break-even ■ Profitable

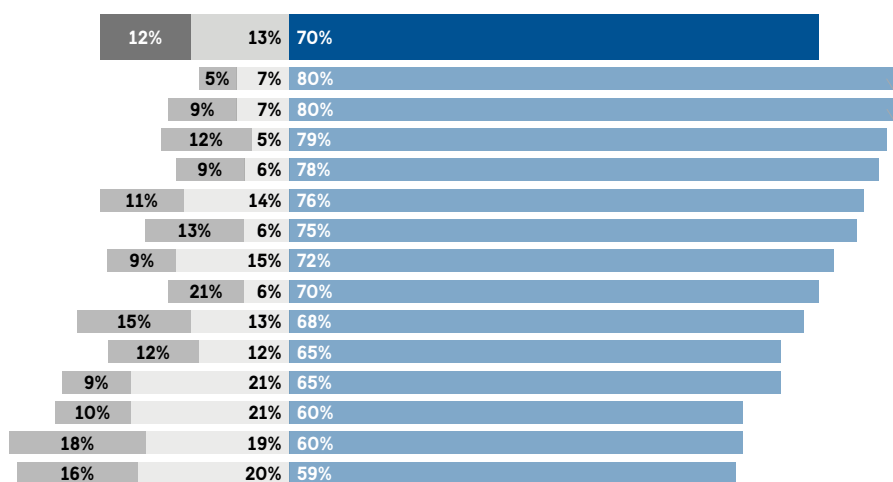
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Americas

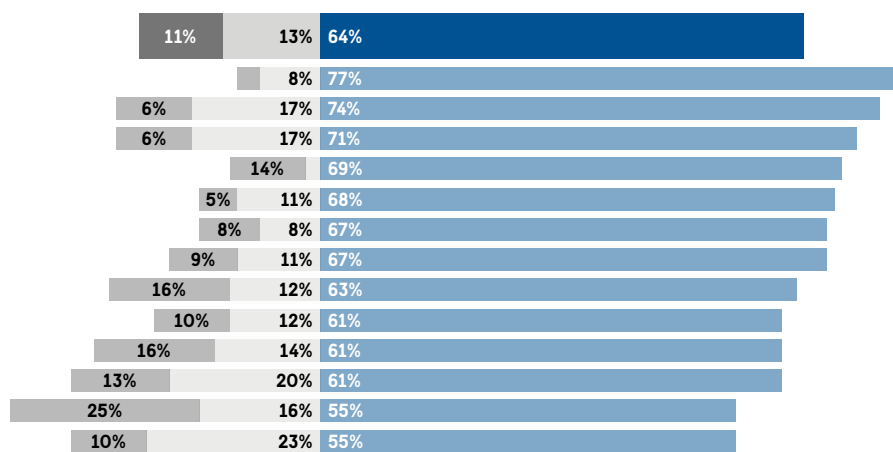


Europe



Markets with highest share of profitable companies are Saudi Arabia, Chile, Spain and Norway

APAC



MEA+



Survey question: How would you describe your company's financial performance in the past year?

Industry turnover

Swedish companies expect turnover to increase with narrowing regional gaps

Swedish companies operating abroad remain optimistic about the coming year, with 65 per cent on average expecting their industry turnover to increase compared to the past 12 months. The strongest expectations are found among newly established companies, where 78 per cent anticipate growth, followed by 66 per cent of experienced companies and 61 per cent of mature ones. Across sectors and company sizes, however, no significant differences were observed.

At the regional level, optimism is relatively evenly distributed. Companies in Europe are the most positive, with 66 per cent expecting

turnover to grow, followed closely by those in APAC (65 per cent), and the Americas and the MEA+ region (63 per cent respectively). The narrow gap between regions reflects a broadly shared confidence in future growth.

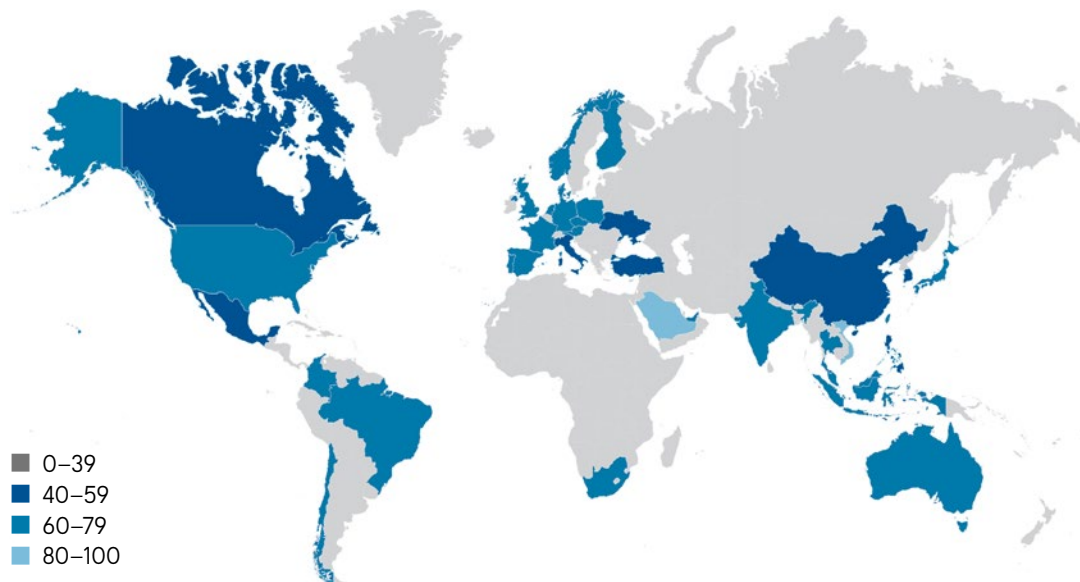
Looking at individual markets, the majority – 65 per cent of all surveyed – reported that between 60 and 79 per cent of companies expect turnover to increase. However, in ten markets including Hong Kong, Türkiye, China, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Ukraine, South Korea, the Philippines and Italy, companies were more cautious, with fewer than 59 per cent anticipating growth. In contrast, expectations were especially strong in Saudi Arabia and Vietnam, where between 80 and 100 per cent of companies foresee an increase in turnover.

“ The young and ambitious workforce provides great talent to support our strategy. Technical capabilities in Vietnam are outstanding and give us the opportunity to extend our engineering scope and add more value to our operations. ”

Assa Abloy Vietnam

65 per cent of Swedish companies abroad expect industry turnover to increase, in line with last year's results

Percentage share of Swedish companies expecting industry turnover to increase in the next 12 months, compared to the previous 12 months



Survey question: Compared to the development in the past 12 months, what are your expectations for the coming 12 months for your industry regarding turnover?

Investment plans

Investment momentum varies by region

With the aim of understanding Swedish companies' investment plans for the next 12 months, the [graph on the next page](#) illustrates how respondents distributed their answers across six categories: "Significantly increase", "Slightly increase", "No change", "Slightly reduce", "Significantly reduce", and "Leave the market". From a global perspective, 14 per cent of the surveyed companies plan to significantly increase their investments, 32 per cent intend to slightly increase, while 38 per cent foresee no change. Meanwhile, eight per cent expect to slightly reduce, and four per cent plan to significantly reduce their investments over the coming year. Small and large companies continue to drive investment plans, particularly within the professional services and industrial sectors.

Looking at regional trends, the Americas lead globally, with nearly 50 per cent of companies planning investment increases, especially in the United States and Chile. MEA+ follows closely, with 49 per cent of companies indicating increased investments. This growth is driven by Saudi Arabia, where a remarkable 74 per cent of firms plan to boost investments, while only 23 per cent in Türkiye report similar intentions. APAC holds third place, with India,

Vietnam, and Thailand leading the way. Conversely, China and Hong Kong show signs of contraction, as 15 per cent of companies plan to reduce or exit their investments. Europe presents a mixed outlook. While a majority of companies in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain report positive investment plans, businesses in Denmark and France appear more cautious.

At a market level, Saudi Arabia, India, the United Kingdom and Vietnam top the rankings for planned future investments, with between 60 per cent and 74 per cent of companies in these markets expecting to slightly or significantly increase their investments over the next year. Conversely, Türkiye and Italy report the highest percentages of companies looking to reduce or exit investments, at 23 per cent and 22 per cent respectively.

Comparing this year's results to last year's, Saudi Arabia and India maintain strong positions as leading investment destinations, while the United Kingdom has emerged as a new top market – rising from ninth place in 2024 to third in 2025. In all three countries, it's primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) leading the way, with the professional services and industrial sectors driving growth in Saudi Arabia and India, and the consumer sector showing particular strength in the United Kingdom.

“ Investments will be significantly increased compared to last years, with a clear focus on strengthening and expanding our network development across the country. ”

Ignacio Urcelay, Managing Director, Scania Chile

“ The UK's substantial infrastructure investment needs and demand for sustainable solutions make it a key growth market for Swedish manufacturers. With rising climate awareness, the UK offers both short-term returns and long-term strategic value. ”

Kerry Olsson, International Sales Manager, Wapro AB

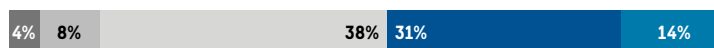


Saudi Arabia, India, the UK and Vietnam are top investment destinations for Swedish companies

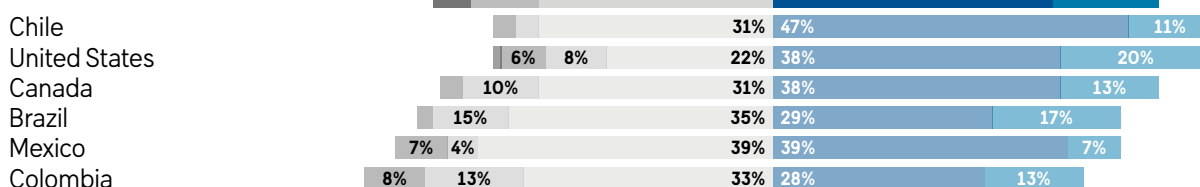
Investment plans in the coming 12 months compared to the previous 12 months, share of respondents.
Response percentages may not add up to 100 as 'don't know' answers are excluded from the graph.

■ Leave market ■ Significantly reduce ■ Slightly reduce ■ No change ■ Slightly increase ■ Significantly increase

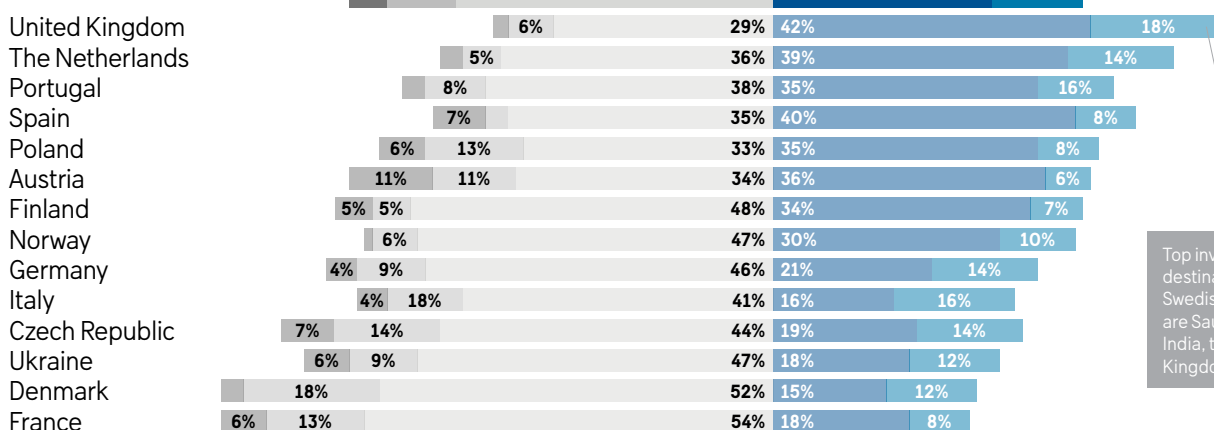
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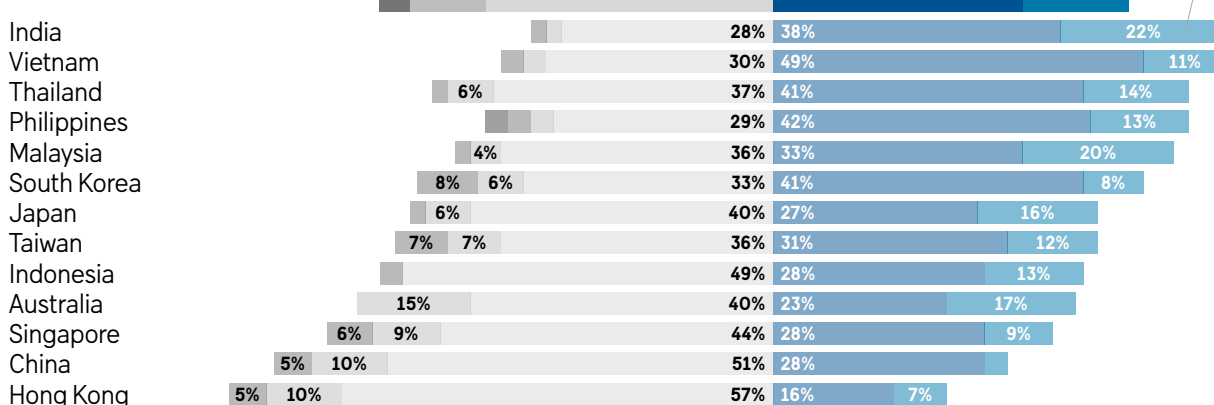


Europe

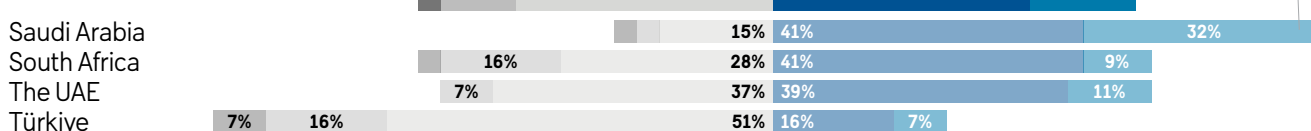


Top investment destinations for Swedish companies are Saudi Arabia, India, the United Kingdom and Vietnam

APAC



MEA+



Survey question: What are your company's investment plans for the coming 12 months compared to the past 12 months?

Success factors

When Swedish companies abroad were asked which aspects are most important to maintain competitiveness, the key success factors globally were cost efficiency, partnerships and sales competence. But the results differed regionally. Companies in the Americas put greatest emphasis on sales competence and brand awareness, while Europe prioritises cost efficiency. In APAC, cost efficiency and product development came to the fore, while MEA+ valued partnerships and collaboration alongside cost considerations.

Key success factors

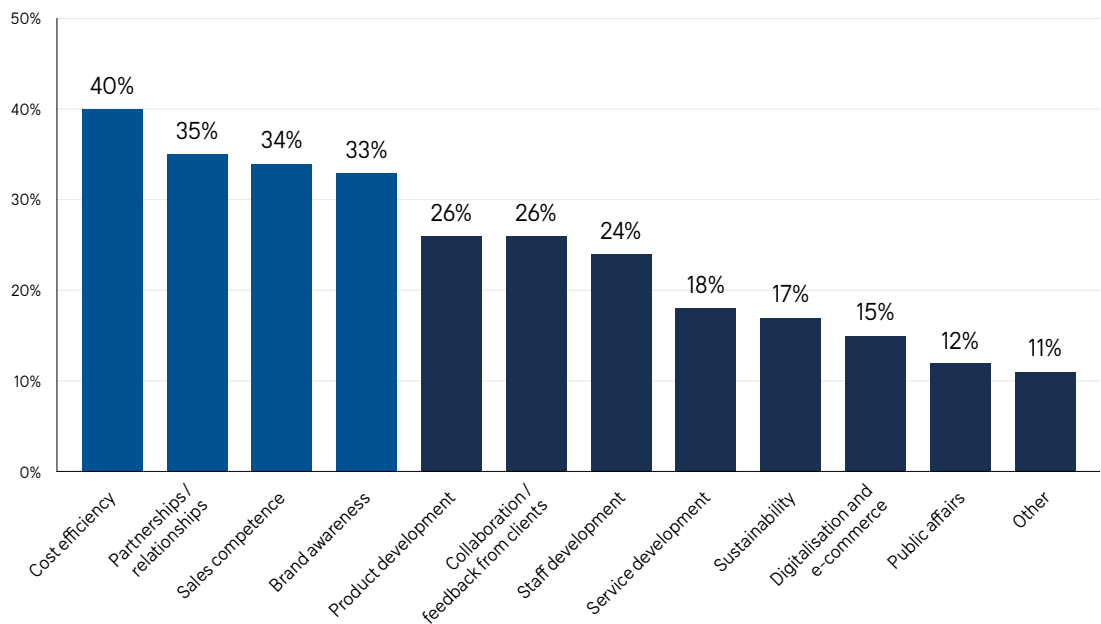
Cost efficiency, partnerships and sales competence.

This section highlights the key success factors identified by Swedish companies when conducting business internationally. Responding companies were asked to select the three most important factors for maintaining competitiveness in their respective markets. As shown in the graph below, cost efficiency, partnerships/

relationships, and sales competence emerged as the top priorities for companies operating on a global scale, closely followed by brand awareness. The results differ depending on the sector as cost efficiency was the most important factor for companies in the industrial sector, while brand awareness scored highest for the consumer sector. Meanwhile, for companies within the professional services, partnerships/relationships were the key success factors.

Cost efficiency tops the ranking for the 3rd year in a row

Success factors ranked in order of priority by global survey respondents.
Response percentages exceed 100 as the question allowed respondents to select multiple answers (max three).



Survey question: Which of the following factors have been important for your company in maintaining competitiveness?

Regional contrasts reflect differing market dynamics

The matrix below illustrates the ranking per country of the different success factors. While some, such as cost efficiency and partnerships, appear consistently across markets, their relative importance varies, reflecting differing market dynamics and competitive landscapes.

Americas: Sales competence is the most important factor, reflecting the need for strong sales and market visibility. Brand awareness also plays a critical role, followed by cost efficiency and partnerships.

Europe: Cost efficiency leads, highlighting the importance of operational efficiency in mature markets. Sales competence and partnerships follow closely, indicating the need for effective sales teams and reliable networks.

APAC: Cost efficiency tops the list, with partnerships also crucial for navigating local markets. Brand awareness and product development emphasise the need for innovation and differentiation in rapidly evolving markets.

MEA+: Cost efficiency remains the top priority, followed by partnerships. Sales competence, brand awareness, and collaboration highlight the importance of strong sales, brand presence, and local relationships.

Sales competence priority in the Americas while cost efficiency scored highest in the other regions

■ First priority ■ Second priority ■ Third priority

	Americas						APAC														Europe														MEA+			
	BR	CA	CL	CO	MX	US	AU	CN	HK	ID	IN	JP	KR	MY	PH	SG	TH	TW	VN	AT	CZ	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	IT	NE	NO	PL	PT	UA	UK	AE	SA	TR	ZA	
Brand awareness																																						
Collaboration with / feedback from customers																																						
Cost efficiency																																						
Digitalisation and e-commerce																																						
Partnerships / local relationships																																						
Product development / adaptation																																						
Public affairs / relations with government																																						
Sales competence																																						
Service development / adaptation																																						
Staff development / training																																						
Sustainability																																						

Survey question: Which of the following factors have been important for your company in maintaining competitiveness?

Note: AU=Australia, AT=Austria, BR=Brazil, CA=Canada, CL=Chile, CN=China, CO=Colombia, CZ=Czech Republic, DK=Denmark, FI=Finland, FR=France, DE=Germany, HK=Hong Kong, IN=India, ID=Indonesia, IT=Italy, JP=Japan, MY=Malaysia, MX=Mexico, NE=The Netherlands, NO=Norway, PH=Philippines, PL=Poland, PT=Portugal, SA=Saudi Arabia, SG=Singapore, ZA=South Africa, KR=South Korea, ES=Spain, TW=Taiwan, TH=Thailand, TR= Türkiye, UA=Ukraine, AE=United Arab Emirates (UAE), UK=United Kingdom, US=United States, VN=Vietnam

Brand Sweden

Companies in APAC and MEA+ report strongest influence of Brand Sweden

A key aspect of the Global Business Climate Survey is to assess how 'Brand Sweden' influences the business success of Swedish companies abroad. Trade and investment promotion organisations including Business Sweden, the Swedish Institute, Swedish embassies, consulates and chambers of commerce actively collaborate to promote Sweden's image internationally, highlighting the country's core brand values. Sweden is recognised for its progressive values and innovative approach, a perception supported by the country's official brand strategy, which highlights openness, care, and authenticity as central values. Further information on Sweden's brand strategy is available at [Sharing Sweden – Brand Strategy](#).

82 per cent of responding companies reported that 'Brand Sweden' contributes to their business success abroad, while only 13 per cent see little or no added value in promoting their Swedish identity. This perception is consistent regardless of company size, age or sector, with a broad consensus that Sweden's national brand enhances competitiveness internationally.

According to the Global Soft Power Index (GSPI), which measures nations' ability to achieve objectives through attraction and influence, Sweden ranks 12th out of 193 countries. The country stands out for its strong reputation

in areas such as low corruption, social values and population welfare, with the green transition emerging as Sweden's most prominent strength, further reinforcing its international brand.

From a regional perspective, the MEA+ region reports the highest share of companies confirming that 'Brand Sweden' contributes to their business success, particularly in Türkiye and Saudi Arabia. This is closely followed by the APAC region, where companies in Vietnam express strong appreciation of Sweden's brand value. The Americas also show positive results, with Chile and Brazil standing out, while in Europe, responses vary. In markets geographically or culturally closer to Sweden, companies tend to be less dependent on the national brand for business success compared to markets in Southern Europe and Ukraine, where the Swedish identity carries greater weight. However, there are exceptions as reflected in the quote from Finland below, where the Swedish brand is described as beneficial for business despite overall lower scores in that market.

Looking at individual markets, Türkiye, Brazil and South Korea reported the highest shares – over 90 per cent – of the companies confirming that 'Brand Sweden' contributes to their business success to some, great or partial extent. In contrast, markets such as the United States, Norway, and Finland showed comparatively lower relevance, with approximately 25 per cent of respondents stating that 'Brand Sweden' offers little or no contribution to their success.

“ Swedish brands are known for delivering innovative, sustainable, and reliable solutions to support the growth of the Turkish mining industry. ”

Z. Irem Palavan Taylaner, Marketing, Branding and Communication Manager,
Epiroc Türkiye & Middle East

“ As a company with Swedish roots, we benefit from Sweden's reputation for quality and reliability. Customers connect that heritage with trustworthy solutions, and our wide range of international references are a key factor in our business success in Finland. ”

Pekka Lehtinen, Country Manager Finland & UK, Consafe Logistics Group

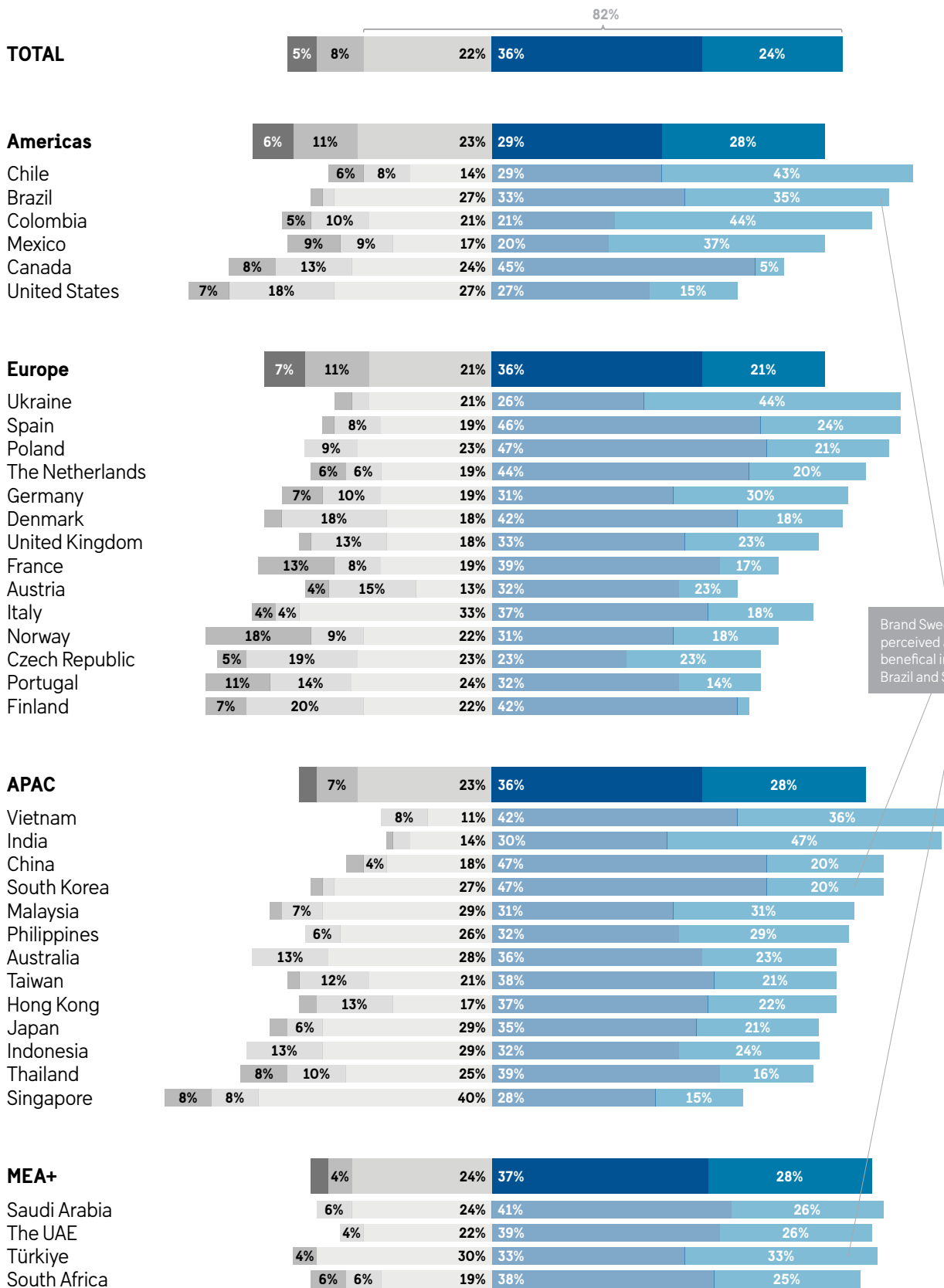


“Brand Sweden” most valuable in Türkiye, Brazil and South Korea

Index measuring the business impact and contribution of ‘Brand Sweden’, share of respondents.

Response percentages may not add up to 100 as ‘don’t know’ answers are excluded from the graph.

■ Not at all ■ Little ■ Partially ■ To an extent ■ To a great extent



Survey question: To what extent do you estimate that ‘Brand Sweden’ contributes to your business success?

Local conditions

Swedish companies are generally satisfied with local conditions in the markets where they are present, although opinions vary by region and market. Globally, personal safety, as well as access to distributors and service providers, are viewed as the most favourable conditions. In contrast, licenses, labour market regulations and corporate taxation are seen as the least favourable across all regions.

Local conditions fulfill company needs in most markets

To gain a detailed understanding of how Swedish companies view local conditions in global markets, this section explores various factors related to three key areas:

- a) *Market related factors*
(Digitalisation, financial system etc.)
- b) *Operation related factors*
(Corporate taxation, labour market etc.)
- c) *Access to qualified partners*
(Distributors, service providers etc.)

The companies were asked to rate, from one to nine, how well local conditions meet their needs in the different markets. The lower the score, the more respondents perceive the factor as a barrier to competitiveness; conversely, the higher the score, the more they view it as a strength for competitiveness. Both similarities and differences may be observed across regions and between markets. For a full description of all factors, please see the [matrix on the next page](#).

From a global perspective, the conditions that most meet the requirements of Swedish companies are personal safety and access to distributors and service providers. The conditions the companies were least satisfied with were licenses, labour market regulations and corporate taxation. The results differ regionally as well as between markets within the regions.

Europe: European markets are praised for personal safety and strong local partnerships. However, corporate taxation, labour market conditions and licenses are major concerns. Denmark is the most favourable market, known for its business-friendly environment, while Ukraine is currently considered the least favourable market in Europe due to the ongoing war, political instability, and a complex regulatory environment.

Americas: Suppliers, distributors and service providers are viewed as conditions with high satisfaction, while corporate taxation, customs, and licenses pose significant challenges. Canada is seen as the best market due to its stable business environment, while Colombia faces more barriers, particularly in regulatory areas.

APAC: Personal safety and access service providers, and distributors are seen as strengths, but licenses, transparency and customs are seen to create challenges. Singapore stands out as the top market, offering a favourable business climate, while Philippines is the least favourable due to regulatory inefficiencies.

MEA+ : Distributors, service providers, and suppliers are the strongest factors, while labour market conditions, transparency, licenses, and corporate taxation are seen as barriers. The UAE is regarded as the best market for its favourable business environment, while South Africa faces challenges with labour issues and regulatory complexity.

“ The Singapore government is forward-looking, investing consistently in infrastructure, transport, digitalisation, and defence. Saab sees strong opportunities to grow and contribute to Singapore’s transformation. ”

Mr Chun-Chau Chew, Country Head, Saab Singapore

Personal safety and access to distributors and suppliers are the top local conditions for Swedish companies operating abroad

Index measuring how local conditions meet needs of Swedish companies, where one equals not at all and nine equals fully

Low Moderate High Very High

		Americas						APAC										Europe										MEA+										
		BR	CA	CL	CO	MX	US	AU	CN	HK	ID	IN	JP	KR	MY	PH	SG	TH	TW	VN	AT	CZ	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	IT	NE	NO	PL	PT	UA	UK	AE	SA	TR	ZA
Market related factors	Digitalisation																																					
	Financial system																																					
	Infrastructure																																					
	Market access																																					
	Transparency																																					
Operations related factors	Corporate taxation																																					
	Customs																																					
	Labour market																																					
	Licenses etc.																																					
	Personal safety																																					
	Work culture																																					
Access to qualified partners	Distributors																																					
	Service providers																																					
	Specialists																																					
	Suppliers																																					

Survey question: Please rate from 1-9 how the below conditions meet the needs of your company's business

Note: AU=Australia, AT=Austria, BR=Brazil, CA=Canada, CL=Chile, CN=China, CO=Colombia, CZ=Czech Republic, DK=Denmark, FI=Finland, FR=France, DE=Germany, HK=Hong Kong, IN=India, ID=Indonesia, IT=Italy, JP=Japan, MY=Malaysia, MX=Mexico, NE=The Netherlands, NO=Norway, PH=Philippines, PL=Poland, PT=Portugal, SA=Saudi Arabia, SG=Singapore, ZA=South Africa, KR=South Korea, ES=Spain, TW=Taiwan, TH=Thailand, TR= Türkiye, UA=Ukraine, AE=United Arab Emirates (UAE), UK=United Kingdom, US=United States, VN=Vietnam

“Ukraine already now offers a wealth of business opportunities, that will only become bigger once the active phase of the war is over. 2024 was the most successful year ever for Scania in Ukraine since we started our operations here 32 years ago.”

Håkan Jyde, Manager, Scania Ukraine

“The young and ambitious workforce provides great talent to support our strategy. Technical capabilities in Vietnam are outstanding and give us the opportunity to extend our engineering scope and add more value to our operations.”

Alison Astarita, VP Operations Vietnam, Assa Abloy

Sustainability

The share of Swedish companies who believe environmental features are important to local customers' purchasing decisions remains highest in Europe, with Norway, the Netherlands, and Denmark leading. The Americas and the APAC region follow, although perceptions vary widely between markets. In the MEA+ region, a lower share of companies reports that sustainability influences customer choices, with South Africa and Türkiye ranking among the least environmentally driven markets globally.

The [graph on the next page](#) illustrates how Swedish companies perceive the importance of environmental features in their local customers' purchasing decisions. From a global perspective, 67 per cent of companies in 2025 stating that sustainability matters to their customers. Looking closer, 38 per cent of respondents said their customers consider environmental aspects to a great extent or some extent when making purchases, 29 per cent responded partially, while another 29 per cent believe environmental considerations carry little or no weight in their customers' decisions.

From a regional perspective, the results look as follows:

Europe

Europe continues to lead, with 72 per cent of companies reporting that their customers value environmental aspects to a notable or partial extent. Within the region, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark rank highest, while Ukraine and Poland show the least emphasis.

Americas

The Americas follow with 63 per cent of respondents highlighting sustainability as a

factor in purchasing decisions. However, attitudes vary. Chile and Canada showing strong environmental awareness, while the United States and Mexico report less emphasis.

APAC

The APAC region ranks third, marked by mixed views. Companies in Australia and Taiwan report high importance placed on sustainability, whereas firms in the Philippines and Malaysia indicate that environmental performance holds less influence over customer purchasing decisions.

MEA+

Lastly, in the MEA+ region, only around half of companies believe their customers prioritise environmental aspects when buying products or services. Responses here are relatively consistent across markets, though South Africa and Türkiye record the lowest importance placing them among the bottom three globally.

From a market perspective, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark lead globally in terms of customer emphasis on environmental factors, while South Africa, Türkiye, the Philippines, and Malaysia report the lowest importance placed on sustainability in customer expectations.

“ Sustainability in Malaysia started with multinationals and publicly listed companies, recently reaching the transport industry. While progress is underway, we must raise awareness among SMEs and stay focused to ensure we meet our sustainability goals for future generations. ”

Johan Larsson, Managing Director of Volvo Trucks Malaysia

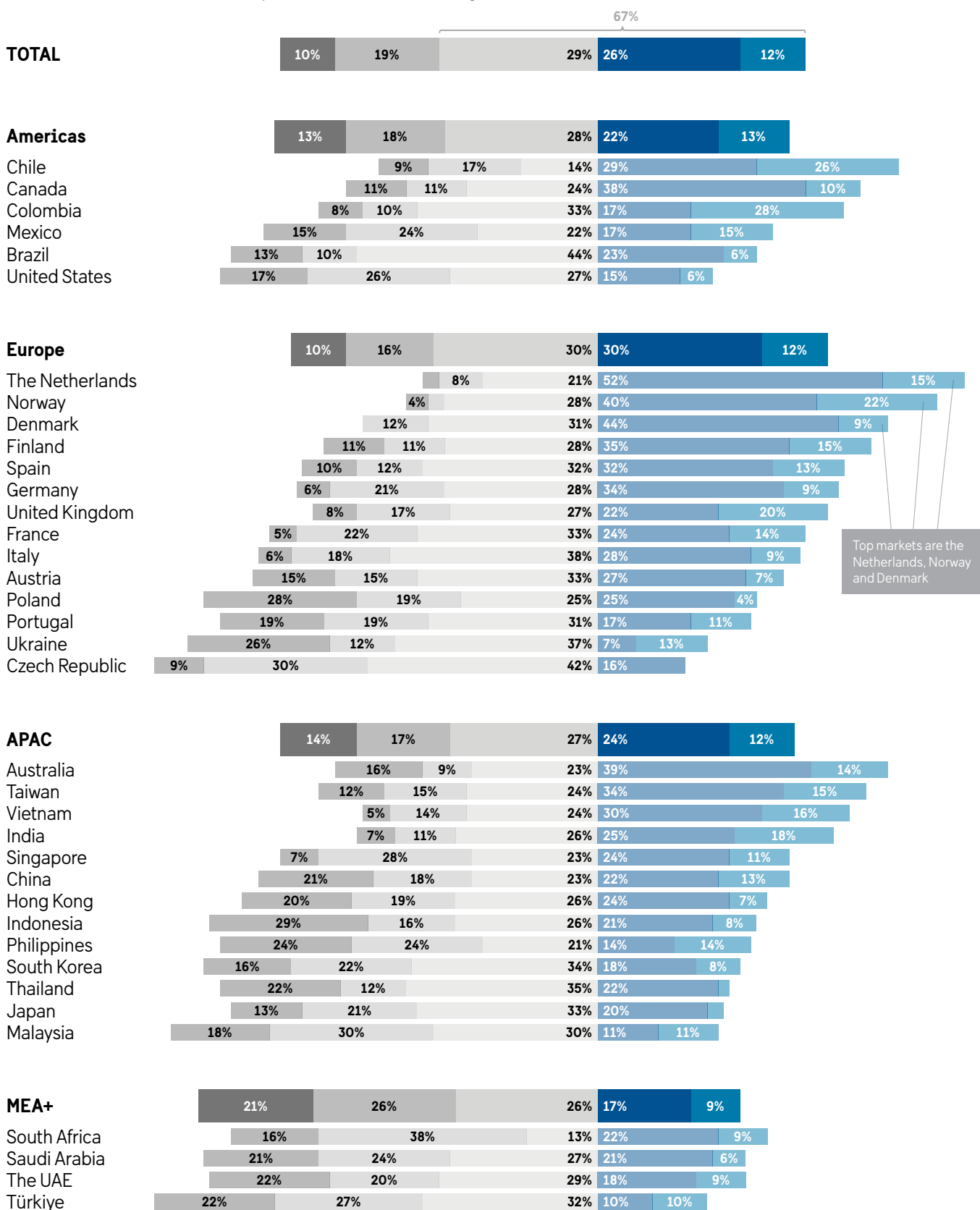
“ At Nornorm, we see a growing awareness among real estate and tenants in the Netherlands, with flexibility and environmental impact becoming a key factor in their purchasing decisions. Our circular, Furniture-as-a-Service model directly aligns with this shift, offering a flexible and sustainable alternative that meets both environmental goals and business needs. ”

Douwe Dirks, CCO, Nornorm

Customer demand for environmental factors is highest in the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark

Share of respondents who believe environmental benefits of products or services are important in customers' purchasing decisions, share of respondents. Response percentages may not add up to 100 as 'don't know' answers are excluded from the graph.

■ Not at all ■ Little ■ Partially ■ To an extent ■ To a great extent



Survey question: In your view, to what extent do customers in your industry consider environmental aspects of a product or service in their purchasing decision?

Swedish companies face the most trade barriers in MEA+ and The Americas

This section examines the trade barriers faced by Swedish companies operating internationally. It is important to note that perceptions of trade barriers can vary between markets, influencing survey results and recent changes to trade tariffs may also have impacted outcomes.

Globally, customs procedures and regulatory requirements are the most commonly encountered trade barriers for Swedish businesses abroad. The highest incidence of trade barriers negatively affecting operations was reported in Indonesia, South Africa and Brazil, though even in these markets, only around 25 per cent of companies cited significant obstacles. At the other end of the spectrum, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Denmark reported the lowest occurrence of trade barriers, offer-

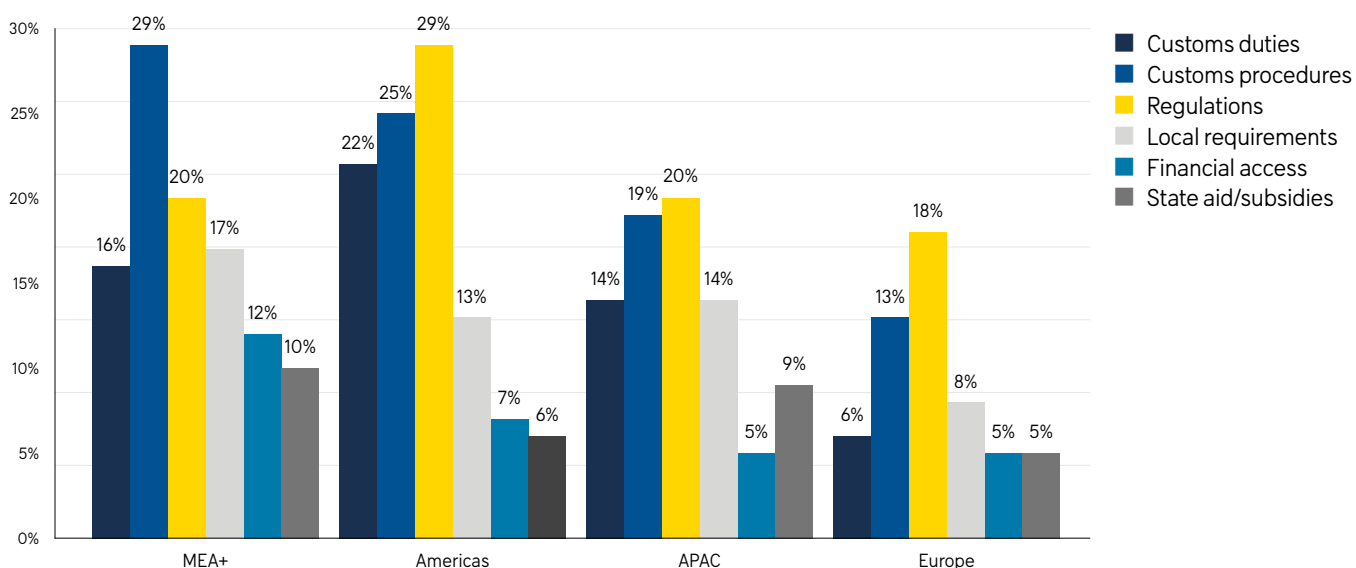
ing more open and accessible market environments for Swedish firms.

From a regional perspective, the MEA+ region is the most challenging environment, followed by the Americas, where a notable share of Swedish companies encounters trade barriers, particularly in South Africa, Türkiye, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. In particular, customs procedures are a key trade barrier in MEA+, while regulations are the main obstacle in the Americas. In the APAC region, experiences are more mixed. Swedish companies in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam report frequent issues with customs procedures and regulations, while firms in Japan and Hong Kong report comparatively smooth market access with minimal barriers. In Europe, trade barriers are generally limited. However, the United Kingdom and Ukraine stand out, likely due to their non-EU status and evolving trade frameworks.

Regulations and customs procedures – most frequent trade barriers

Share of trade barriers with noticeably negative impact on operations.

Response percentages may not add up to 100 as 'don't know' answers are excluded in the graph.



Survey question: Has your company in the past encountered trade barriers with a noticeably negative impact on operations, in any of the following areas?

“We understand the concept of localisation, but currently local (component) manufacturers are not ready to fulfill certain standards (according to our requirements), hence it becomes very challenging for our business.”

Cahyo Harbianto, President Director PT Volvo Indonesia

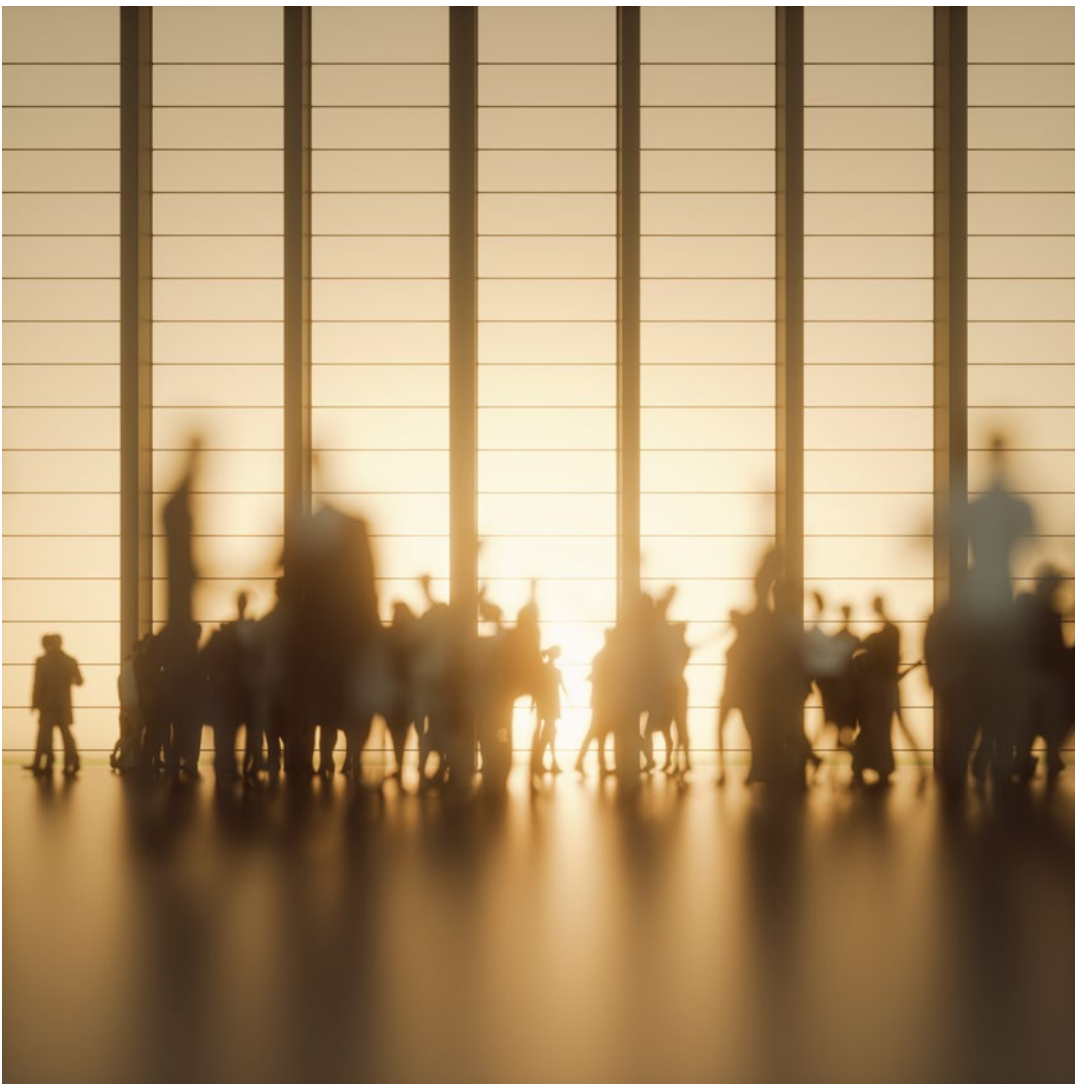
Monitoring corruption and human rights

This section examines the levels of corruption and human rights violations encountered by Swedish companies operating internationally. It is important to note that perceptions of these issues can vary by market, potentially influencing survey outcomes.

Starting with corruption, only four markets (the Philippines, Thailand, Colombia, and Mexico) had more than five per cent of responding companies reporting direct experiences of corruption. Overall, the findings indicate that

corruption risks tend to be higher in emerging markets compared to advanced economies, with incidents primarily involving public sector stakeholders, followed by private sector counterparts.

Regarding human rights violations, the survey reveals that relatively few Swedish companies report exposure to such risks. Where issues are identified, the highest risk typically arises within local partners and collaborators, particularly around labour rights and working conditions.



Supplementary Markets



Kenya

The 2025 Business Climate Survey for Swedish companies in Kenya

highlights a moderately positive outlook. 68 per cent of companies rate the business climate as good or very good, yet challenges persist – especially in customs, VAT refunds, and corruption. Sustainability is a growing market driver, with 72 per cent noting customers care about environmental performance. The Swedish brand remains strong, associated with quality and innovation. However, informality and regulatory unpredictability hinder growth. Swedish companies continue contributing to Kenya's development through sustainable solutions in healthcare, energy, and ICT. Insights from the survey will guide Team Sweden's engagement and advocacy efforts in Kenya moving forward.

“Kenya presents immense potential, but success depends on understanding the decision-making process. Knowing who the key decision-makers are, how to engage with them, and at what level can save businesses significant time and effort.”

Ismail Eleburuike, CEO, SchoolTry



Slovakia

Swedish companies in Slovakia maintain a strong and diverse

presence, with most having operated locally for over two decades. The business landscape is dominated by large companies, and most operate within the industrial sector and professional services. The market is valued for its skilled workforce, strategic location, and industrial capacity. However, companies express growing concern over the local business climate, with 62 per cent of respondents rating it as poor or very poor. Key issues include unpredictable policymaking, low institutional transparency, and increased regulatory burden. Despite challenges, most firms remain committed to Slovakia and call for reforms to support a more transparent and business-friendly environment.

“The current political situation is having a major impact on business in Slovakia. Due to many poor government decisions, the country is no longer as competitive within Europe, leading to reduced foreign investments.”

Global producer and distributor of consumer goods



Morocco

The 2025 Business Climate Survey shows that Swedish companies in

Morocco maintain a positive outlook, with 78% reporting good or very good financial performance and 83% expecting increased turnover. Half of the respondents plan to increase investments. Most are large industrial firms, with 72% in the industrial sector and over 50% established before 2003. Some companies have faced trade barriers, mainly related to access to financing and customs duties and procedures. Sustainability is gaining importance, with 50% of companies noting its influence on customer decisions. This aligns with the strong reputation of the Swedish brand, a key competitive advantage in the Moroccan market.

“Morocco is experiencing a massive growth in foreign investments, driven by key sectors like aerospace, automotive, renewable energy, and major infrastructure projects. Volvo Maroc, as a leader in transport solutions and green transformation, is very well prepared to fulfill the growing market demand and be an important contributor in the exciting and fast development of the country.”

Goran Travančić, Managing Director, Volvo Maroc



Peru

The first-ever Business Climate Survey for Peru reveals that 70% of

Swedish companies perceive the business environment as positive. A majority of firms report profitability (85%), and 65% intend to increase investments within the next 12 months. Key success factors include strong local partnerships, brand awareness, and cost efficiency. The “Swedish brand” is widely recognised and particularly valued by smaller firms. While customs procedures and local distributors are viewed favourably, challenges persist – most notably inadequate infrastructure, limited digitalisation, and political instability. Peru is currently experiencing social unrest and pre-electoral uncertainty, which continue to affect business operations.

“Peru remains an attractive market for Swedish companies and our customers, particularly in the mining industry. Having large copper deposits, Peru is well-positioned as a key country that could support the energy transition. This is demonstrated by the expected investments in Peru by mining companies in the next few years.”

Ricardo Begazo, Local Division Manager Process Industry, ABB Peru

Technical notes

About the survey

This year, the Global Business Climate Survey covers 37 markets. It was first published in 2020 and has now been conducted for the sixth consecutive year. Additionally, the survey was also conducted in four other markets: Kenya, Morocco, Peru and Slovakia. These markets are not included in the global survey results, as they did not meet the minimum requirements of at least 30 company responses. However, as the insights from these markets are considered highly relevant for Swedish companies operating abroad, links to their local reports have been included, along with an executive summary for each market, in the Appendix.

Survey recipients and response rates

The Global Business Climate Survey was distributed to companies with Swedish ownership, origin or identity. It was sent to C-level executives at the respective companies and included 18 standard questions, along with some additional market-specific questions. No new questions were added to the harmonised questionnaire compared to last year's survey.

In total, more than 2,000 representatives of Swedish companies abroad responded to the survey, with most markets achieving a high response rate.

Regional grouping

The markets included in each regional aggregate are listed below.

Europe

Austria
Czech Republic
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Italy
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Spain
The Netherlands
Ukraine
United Kingdom

The Americas

Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Mexico
United States

Middle East, Africa and surrounding markets (MEA+)

Saudi Arabia
South Africa
Türkiye
United Arab Emirates

APAC

Australia
China
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
Philippines
Singapore
South Korea
Taiwan
Thailand
Vietnam

Weighting of aggregate data

The number of respondents from the surveyed regions does not proportionally represent the actual number of companies operating in these areas. To achieve a more accurate representation, the results reported at an aggregated level (sometimes referred to as the survey weighted average or total global average) have been adjusted based on the total turnover of Swedish companies in the respective regions. For instance, responses from European surveys are given more weight in the overall survey results compared to those from the MEA+ region, reflecting the higher total turnover of Swedish companies in Europe. These weights are derived from the total turnover of Swedish subsidiaries in each region for the year 2022, according to statistics from the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis.

The weights used for each region

Region	Weight
Europe	61.7 %
The Americas	23.7 %
APAC	12.1 %
MEA+	2.5 %

